

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **MISSOURI CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Missouri. The CFSR assesses State performance on seven child welfare outcomes pertaining to children's safety, permanency, and well being and on seven systemic factors related to the State's capacity to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. The Missouri CFSR was conducted the week of December 8, 2003 (in Federal fiscal year 2004). The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Department of Social Services, Children's Division (CD).
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2002;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites in the State (Jackson County [Kansas City], Jasper County, and St. Louis County).
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, Tribal representatives, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 50 cases reviewed are the following:

- Twenty-four cases were reviewed in Jackson County, 14 in St. Louis County, and 12 in Jasper County.
- All 50 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 26 cases were "foster care cases" (cases in which the State child welfare agency had care and placement responsibility and the child was in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 24 were "in-home services cases" (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained with their families and no child in the family was in out-of-home care during the period under review).
- Of the 26 foster care cases, 11 children (42%) were younger than age 10 at the start of the period under review; 6 children (23%) were at least 10 years old, but not yet 13 years old; and 9 children (35%) were 13 years of age or older at the start of the period under review.
- Of the 26 foster care cases, 14 children were male and 12 were female.

- Of the 50 cases reviewed, there were 22 cases (44%) in which all children in the family were White; 23 cases (46%) in which all children in the family were African American; 3 cases (6%) in which all children in the family were of two or more races; and 2 cases (4%) in which the children in the family were Native American.
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, reviewers identified the following as the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 18 cases (36%)
  - Physical abuse – 11 cases (22%)
  - Substance abuse by parents – 8 cases (16%)
  - Sexual abuse – 5 cases (10%)
  - Abandonment – 4 cases (8%)
  - Child's behavior – 3 cases (6%)
  - Domestic violence in the home – 1 case (2%)
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the most frequently cited of all reasons for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 25 cases (50% of all cases)
  - Physical abuse – 19 cases (38% of cases).
  - Substance abuse by parents – 18 cases (36% of cases)
  - Sexual abuse – 12 cases (24% of cases)
- In 19 (79%) of the 24 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in care during the entire period under review.

The first section of this report presents CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State's status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the seven systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.